

established an admissions process based on race. At the undergraduate level, African American students and some Hispanic students and Native American students receive 20 points out of a maximum of 150, not because of any academic achievement or life experience but solely because they are African American, Hispanic, or Native American.

To put this in perspective, a perfect SAT score is worth only 12 points in the Michigan system. Students who accumulate 100 points are generally admitted, so those 20 points awarded solely based on race are often the decisive factor.

At the law school, some minority students are admitted to meet percentage targets, while other applicants with higher grades and better scores are passed over. This means that students are being selected or rejected based primarily on the color of their skin. The motivation for such an admissions policy may be very good, but its result is discrimination, and that discrimination is wrong.

Some States are using innovative ways to diversify their student bodies. Recent history has proven that diversity can be achieved without using quotas. Systems in California and Florida and Texas have proven that by guaranteeing admissions to the top students from high schools throughout the State, including low-income neighborhoods, colleges can attain broad racial diversity. In these States, race-neutral admissions policies have resulted in levels of minority attendance for incoming students that are close to and in some instances slightly surpass those under the old race-based approach.

We should not be satisfied with the current numbers of minorities on Americans' college campuses. Much progress has been made. Much more is needed. University officials have the responsibility and the obligation to make a serious, effective effort to reach out to students from all walks of life without falling back on unconstitutional quotas. Schools should seek diversity by considering a broad range of factors in admissions, including a student's potential and life experiences.

Our Government must work to make college more affordable for students who come from economically disadvantaged homes. And because we're committed to racial jus-

tice, we must make sure that America's public schools offer a quality education to every child from every background, which is the central purpose of the education reforms I signed last year.

America's long experience with the segregation we have put behind us and the racial discrimination we still struggle to overcome requires a special effort to make real the promise of equal opportunity for all. My administration will continue to actively promote diversity and opportunity in every way that the law permits.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:30 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to two related cases before the Supreme Court, *Barbara Grutter, Petitioner v. Lee Bollinger, et al* and *Jennifer Gratz and Patrick Hamacker, Petitioners v. Lee Bollinger, et al*. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Proclamation 7640—Religious Freedom Day, 2003

January 15, 2003

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Each year on January 16, we celebrate Religious Freedom Day in commemoration of the passage of the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom by the Virginia General Assembly, which occurred on this day in 1786. Drafted by Thomas Jefferson, this historic law provided the inspiration and the framework for the religious freedom clauses in the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

The religious freedom provisions of our Constitution—the Establishment Clause and the Free Exercise Clause—open the first of the ten amendments that make up the Bill of Rights. Because the Framers placed the guarantee of religious freedom before other cherished rights, religious liberty in America is often called the first freedom. The right to have religious beliefs and to freely practice such beliefs are among the most fundamental freedoms we possess. James Madison once

said that “the Religion then of every man must be left to the conviction and conscience of every man; and it is the right of every man to exercise it as these may dictate. This right is in its nature an unalienable right.”

Our Founding Fathers recognized that religious freedom is a right we must protect with great vigilance. We must continue our efforts to uphold justice and tolerance and to oppose prejudice; and we must be resolved to countering any means that infringe on religious freedom.

Religious faith has inspired many of our fellow citizens to help build a better Nation. In America today, people of faith continue to wage a determined campaign to meet needs and fight suffering. Through the efforts of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, my Administration has been working to ensure that faith-inspired organizations do not face discrimination simply because of their religious orientation. I recently signed an Executive Order to ensure equal treatment for faith-based charities that are offering hope to those in need.

As we celebrate the freedom of faith in America, we also recognize that there are many people around the world who do not enjoy such freedoms. The right to believe and express one’s beliefs in words and practice is a right that should belong to all people. Through the Department of State’s Office of International Religious Freedom, my Administration has been working to call attention to religious persecution and to encourage our allies, friends, and trading partners to provide and protect this fundamental human right for all people around the world. By working together to secure religious freedom around the world, we can create a better future for people of all faiths.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim January 16, 2003, as Religious Freedom Day. I encourage all Americans to reflect on the great blessing of religious freedom and to endeavor to preserve this freedom for future generations, and to commemorate this day through appro-

priate events and activities in homes, schools, and places of worship.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this fifteenth day of January, in the year of our Lord two thousand three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-seventh.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., January 21, 2003]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on January 22.

Remarks at the University of Scranton in Scranton, Pennsylvania

January 16, 2003

Thank you all. Please be seated. Thanks for coming, and thanks for the warm welcome—inside. [Laughter] It’s great to be back in Scranton, Pennsylvania, home of a lot of really fine people and a great university.

And I want to thank the University of Scranton for the hospitality. I want to thank Father Joe McShane for opening up this wonderful facility for me, and a lot of members of the congressional delegation have come and the great Secretary of Health and Human Services, Tommy Thompson.

I appreciate you all putting up with us and giving me a chance to talk about a significant problem which faces America. And that problem is the fact that our medical liability system is broken, and therefore, a lot of Americans don’t have access to affordable health care. And I’m here to declare in Pennsylvania, I intend to work with Congress to do something about it and fix the problem.

And we’re going to need your help. Democracy can respond. People in Washington tend to respond when the people speak. [Laughter] So I’m going to spend a little time today encouraging you and those who may be watching on TV to start speaking on your behalf, to make sure that you can afford health care in America.

I’m traveling today with some mighty fine folks. One person decided to go back to